

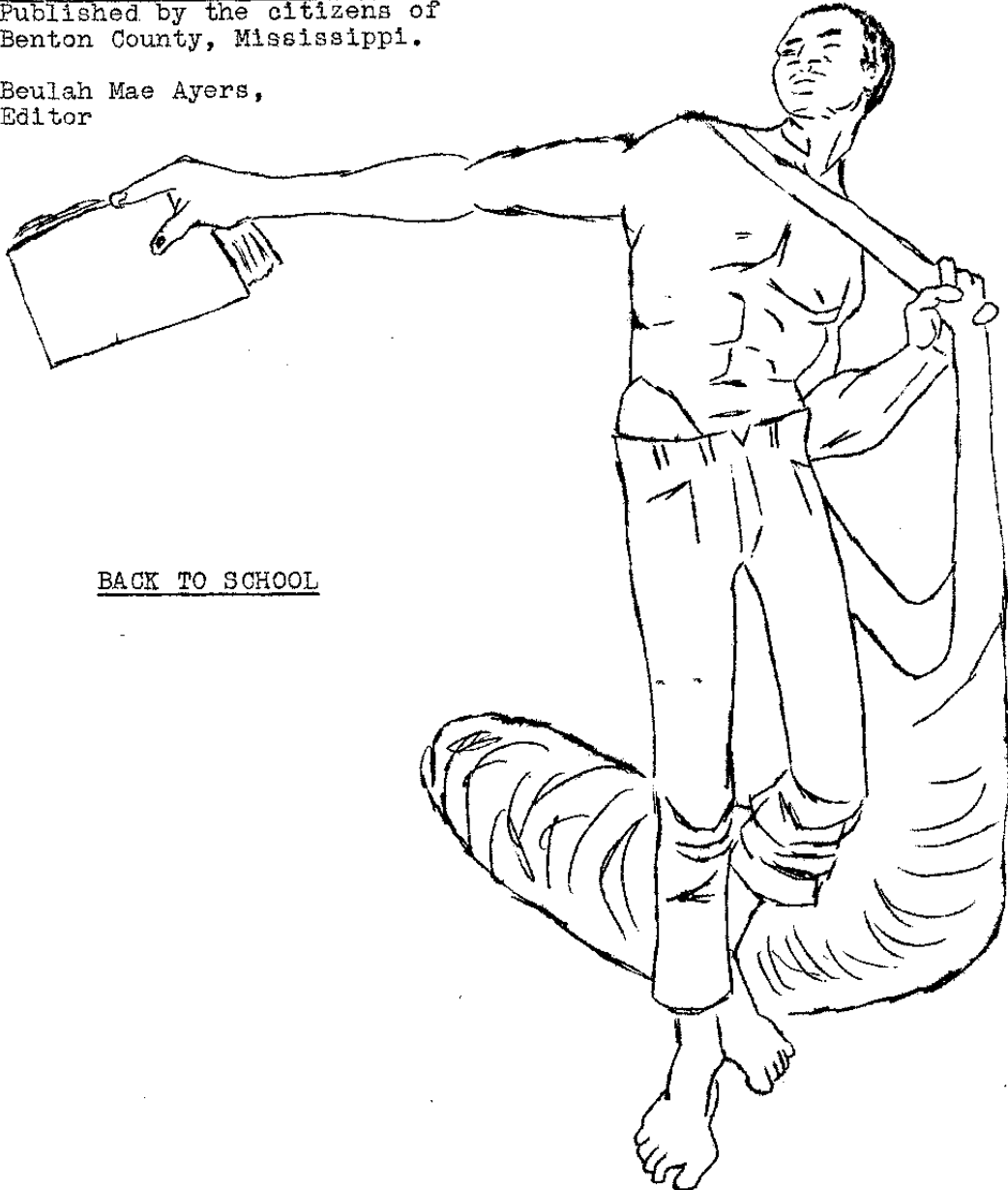
BENTON
COUNTY



"It's that Freedom Train a'comin'; get on board, get on board."
VOLUME II, NUMBER 6 NOVEMBER 15, 1964

Published by the citizens of
Benton County, Mississippi.

Beulah Mae Ayers,
Editor



BACK TO SCHOOL

A.S.C.S. Office Fails to Notify Negro Farmers

With A.S.C.S. community elections a little more than two weeks away, Citizens Club representatives report that approximately one-third of eligible Negro farmers in Benton County have not received letters announcing the coming elections.

These letters are sent out by the ASCS office every year at the beginning of November. How the office manager could omit one-third of the names from the voters list is hard to understand. All those who have not received letters, however, and have gone to the office to complain, have promptly been put on the voters list.

The citizens club will be holding an all-county meeting this coming Tuesday, November 17, at Hardaway chapel, to discuss the coming elections. Ballots will be mailed out by the ASCS office on November 23. Anyone who does not receive one may then go down to the ASCS office and request a ballot.

M.S.U. to Meet

The Mississippi Student Union, made up of the Freedom Youth Movement and all interested young people of Benton County, will hold an organizational meeting on Saturday, November 21, at 6 p.m. at Harris Chapel. All students are invited to attend the meeting and join the union. The M.S.U. is made up of Negro students throughout the state who are interested in changing the present system of segregation and oppression in Mississippi.

Answers to last week's riddles

1. A man riding a horse
2. A shoe
- 3.3. A needle

ONE MAN-ONE VOTE
Register and Vote

Second District Elects a Woman

The citizens of the second district in Benton County have decided that not only will Benton be the first county in the state to elect a Negro ASCS committeeman, but it will also be the first to elect a woman to the ASCS committee.

Mrs. Sarah Robinson was nominated for ASCS committeewoman at a meeting of the 2nd district of the Citizens Club, after Mr. Jake McAfee withdrew his name from the ballot, because he will be moving out of the district in a few months.

About the Community Center

by Walter Rooks
I think we need a community center for our county, So we could work and do our best. We need it so we could have our Freedom School there. We need it so we could have just about anything we want to. Don't you think we need one?

So you could raise your children up right, So you could play your games and anything you want to.

Anyway, you need it as much as I do. So that's why I think we need a community center.

BENTON COUNTY CALENDAR

- Nov. 17: all-county meeting of Citizens Club
- Nov. 24: 2nd district meeting of Citizens Club--place to be announced.
- Nov. 25: 3rd district meeting of Citizens Club: Mt. Zion Chapel
- Nov. 26: 1st district meeting of Citizens Club: Hardaway Chapel
- Next Rainy Day: Freedom Day at Hardaway Chapel.

Answers to Edith:

(In last week's issue of the newspaper, Edith White wrote an article concerning how to act when white youths laugh at you. She asked for others' opinions on the subject. The following answers were written):

If I saw a group of whites laughing at me as I passed their way, I would say to them, "Go to Hell." My reason for saying this is that they would be astonished to hear a Negro boy alone react to them that way.

To be honest, I would be hurt, but to hide my feelings, I would say this in order to make them know I am not humble and afraid, as they probably think I would be. So my inner pride would be lifted for me.

Roy L. Deberry, Jr.

* * * *

. . . I would simply ignore them because I feel it's the most sensible thing to do. Ignoring a person is one way of letting him know you think he's being silly. It hurts to be ignored. He might be cheerful and jolly to cover the hurt and embarrassment, but to be ignored hurts anyone, even an animal. To be ignored if one is guilty of an act of cruelty makes one feel guilty and ashamed deep down inside.

What if the whites think that the Negro is being scared as usual and willing to take anything? Well, I believe that if you remain quiet or start to bicker, he'll believe whatever he wants to believe about you anyway.

If you started to quarrel with them, it would only give them an excuse to justify their actions. Furthermore, you would at that moment reach their level--which would be very low. By quarreling, a person would not be less guilty and certainly not less ignorant.

--Alberta Tipler

I know how hard it is to ever be in a situation like Edith described. Yet I disagree with her.

Sure, one will feel hatred when someone is laughing at you. But I believe you must return good for evil. By doing this, you will be "piling red hot coals of fire on your enemies' heads." Just do something similar against someone and let them do nothing in return. Believe me it will hurt!

--Roy Nunnally

* * * *

If white boys or girls were laughing at you, do you think walking up to them and saying something nice would stop them or change their attitude or make them feel bad for what they said? Or do you think saying something nasty would embarrass them or make things worse? Or would cursing them out change their feeling?

I believe the right thing to do is to walk on by and don't pay them any attention. The reason you should do this is that you will not cause yourself to be embarrassed and you won't give them anything more to laugh at, and there won't be any chance of showing that your feelings have been hurt.

--Loyal W. Thompson, J

* * * *

Dear Edith,

If you act like a misled white person, you will become a misled Negro. If everyone acted like this we would be like we were 300 years ago.

I think the best thing to do is to try and show those laughing girls that they are wrong. If words don't work, try something else on them. Whenever you find them laughing, give them a very concerned look, one that seems to say, "You doleful people," one that says, "You look down on us?"

I suggest this because I think they would act better if they were given the chance.

--Earnestyne Evans

* * * *

(The above articles were written by students in the college-prep class)

The Negro Poets Speak:

VARI-COLORED SONG

By Langston Hughes

If I had a heart of gold,
As have some folks I know,
I'd up and sell my heart of gold
And head North with the dough.

But I don't have a heart of gold.
My heart's not even lead.
It's made of plain old Miss'ipi clay.
That's why my heart is red.

I wonder why red clay's so red
And Miss'ipi skies so blue.
I wonder why it's yes to me,
But yes, sir, sir, to you.

I wonder why the sky's so blue
And why the clay's so red,
Why down South is always down
And never up instead.

DREAM OF FREEDOM

by Langston Hughes

There is a dream in the land
With its back against the wall.
By muddled names and strange
Sometimes the dream is called.

There are those who claim
This dream for theirs alone--
A sin for which, we know,
They must atone.

Unless shared in common
Like sunlight and like air,
The dream will die for lack
Of substance anywhere.

The dream knows no frontier or
tongue,
The dream no class or race.
The dream cannot be kept secure
In any one locked place.

This dream today embattled,
With its back against the wall--
To save the dream for one
It must be saved for ALL.

--AND FROM OUR OWN BENTON POETS:

I KNOW A TEACHER

by G. N. Reaves

I know a teacher,
Who is a traitor to the Negro race.
As an American, he is a liability and disgrace.
The poor critter is afraid to take a stand,
To do his duty and be a man.

I know a teacher
Who gets insulted when you say the words, "register-vote."
He swears the white man will get his goat.
He goes into a rage when you talk about power at the polls
He stalks and shouts, "My bread is my goal!"

Comment: OK, OK, all right, big boy, have your bread.
But for me--before I'd be a slave,
I'd rather be dead.

WE HAVE TEACHERS

by H. E. Reaves, Jr.

We have teachers--
You don't know very well.
Shh--can you keep a secret--don't tell?
The teachers I refer to can read, write, and spell.
But you just take note:
They are too stupid to register and vote.

NEGRO HISTORY SECTION

FREEDOM IS A POWERFUL WORD

What every slave wanted, of course, was freedom. Even those philosophers who tried to defend the right of men to hold other men in bondage had to admit that if you justify the master's right to enslave, you must also justify the right of the slave to try to get away. If

If you argue that a master may punish a slave in order to subdue him, you must grant that the slave has the right to turn on his master in an effort to win freedom.

In the days of the American Revolution the air was always full of discussion and debate in this vein. There was also much talk about the equality of all men before God. Slaves were not supposed to understand such matters, but they listened to their masters' conversation as they served at table, and sometimes they bent an ear from the driver's seat as the gentlefolk whispered in their carriages. Without appearing to pay attention, they overheard talk in taverns and on the public squares. Occasionally an educated slave or free Negro gathered a group of illiterate ones around himself in a secret place and read from the books, papers, handbills and broadsides of the times. Nearly always the subject of this reading was freedom.

It was not long before the slaves themselves were convinced that they were entitled to freedom and that they were being unjustly and sinfully held in bondage. But what to do about it was a harder question. Some slaves solved their problem by joining the army of the Revolution. Others ran away and took up with the Indians. A few tried to reason with their masters. A still smaller number found ways of buying their own freedom. But all of these efforts together were small and failed to benefit the great majority of Negroes held in bondage.

Not until sailors began bringing reports of the successful uprising of slaves in Haiti under Toussaint L'Ouverture and his associates did large numbers of American slaves feel encouraged to make daring attempts to win freedom by insurrection. Many had resisted and rioted, of course, but perhaps the first to work out a serious plan for organized rebellion was Gabriel Prosser of Henrico County, Virginia.

This dreamy young coachman, twenty-four years old and more than six feet tall, thought it all through very carefully. He would need eleven hundred men at the start. They would meet at a brook six miles out of Richmond on the night of September 1, 1800. There they would divide into three columns, each under the command of a dependable officer, and all would march on the city at the same time. Since Richmond's population was no more than about eight thousand in those days, Gabriel was convinced that eleven hundred men could take it by moving swiftly.

The column that approached from the right would be assigned to seize the penitentiary. This building had recently been converted into an arsenal, and it contained several thousand muskets. The column on the left would be instructed to take the powder house. No weapons could be provided the men in these columns at first because there would be no way for Gabriel to get his hands on enough fire arms to go around. He did not think this a hindrance, however, for the success of their assignments would depend more on speed and surprise than on fire power.

Clubs would do the job, he thought. The men could come in silently, overpower the guards in the darkness, and then take possession.

With the third column, ordered to hit the town itself, things would be different. These men were to divide themselves and enter Richmond from both ends at once. They were to attack the general population, sparing those believed to be friendly to their cause. Naturally, they would have to start out with arms of some sort--guns that could be secured in advance, cutlasses, knives, and pikes.

In just a few hours they would have control of Richmond. Then, with plenty of muskets and powder, with the State treasury to provide money, with the mills to give them bread, and the control of the bridge across the James River to keep off enemies from beyond, they would be solidly established, and their forces could spread out over the countryside. Within a week they would have fifty thousand men on their side, enough to enable them to attack and capture other towns.

If the plan sounds fantastic now, it didn't then. The Richmond reporter for the Boston Chronicle wrote immediately afterwards, "They could scarcely have failed of success, for after all, we could only muster four or five hundred men, of whom not more than thirty had muskets."

But it did not succeed. A great storm arose, washing out bridges and swelling streams in Henrico County so they could not be crossed. The eleven hundred men who had answered Gabriel's call found themselves plopping around in mud up to their knees. The attack had to be postponed, and before it could be reorganized, the news leaked out, and the government took steps to protect the city and its citizens. Gabriel and a number of his associates were hunted, caught, and hanged. But a wave of fear spread over the land of slavery.

In the same year that Gabriel's rebellion failed, Denmark Vesey, a Negro slave of Charleston, South Carolina, the personal servant of a slave-trading sea captain, bought a ticket in a lottery. He drew a prize of 1500 dollars. With a part of this money he bought his freedom; with the rest he started a new life in Charleston.

He had been in bondage since he was fourteen. Now at 34 he went to work as a carpenter. He was thrifty and got ahead. He wore a beard and made an impressive appearance. He was admired and feared, but he was another who did not feel secure while all around him the people he knew were still in bondage. He began to plan a revolt.

Denmark Vesey was a man who respected learning. He could speak several languages, and all the men he chose to be leaders of his rebellion were literate. All of them were younger than Vesey, for by this time he was about 56. His method was to prepare his leaders by reading to them and pointing out arguments to be found in the Bible justifying the slave in rising against his oppressors.

He was a convincing talker, and many slaves were ready to act when he gave the word, but one of their number informed his master, and the authorities came in swiftly and crushed the plot. Vesey and many of his associates were arrested and put to death.

(To be continued in the next issue)